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New Study Says Television Remote Control is Leading Carrier of Bacteria in Patient's Hospital Room

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PHOENIX -- A new study by University of Arizona microbiology professor Charles Gerba ranks the TV remote control as the highest carrier of bacteria in a patient's hospital room compared to the toilet bowl handle, bathroom door and call buttons, among others. Even more disturbing is the detection of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) on the remote control. As an antibiotic-resistant bacteria, MRSA is a leading cause of infection and death in hospitals. The study involved 15 hospital rooms to determine if the greatest number of bacteria in a patient's room occur on the remote control. Samples were tested for total bacteria numbers, and of the 28 remotes, 20 had been used by multiple patients and 8 remotes were single-patient use.

The total average bacteria on sites in the hospital room were 91, compared to the average for the remote controls at 320. The sites tested included the hand rail, call button, tray table, door knob in/out, bath door out, faucet handle, and flush handle. Additionally, the study involved 20 samples of newly opened disposable remotes. In this case, the average total bacteria for the newly opened disposable remote controls were significantly less at 8.35.

"At a time when more and more patients are increasingly becoming ill and dying due to hospital-acquired infections, this study has undisputedly identified a leading source of bacteria," said Gerba. "The positive aspect of this study is that there is an easy solution. Since newly opened disposable remotes showed a very small level of bacteria, perhaps we can quickly fix the problem with disposable remote controls."

According to a review published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, infections acquired by patients in hospitals are estimated to affect 2 million people resulting in 90,000 deaths, annually. Patients with hospital-acquired infections spend an average of 14 days in the hospital compared to other patients and account for more than \$9.5 billion in excess medical bills. Even more staggering was the detection of MRSA bacteria on television remote controls in patient hospital rooms. MRSA cannot be treated with antibiotics and is of major concern to hospital staff as a leading cause of hospital-acquired infection and death.

"These numbers clearly show the remote controls as having three times greater levels of bacteria than any other site in the hospital room," said Gerba. "Five years ago, the Institute of Medicine called for a national effort to make healthcare safe, especially for hospital infections. If there are more bacteria on the remote control vs. the toilet bowl flusher, then we need to do a better job to offset infection and deaths."

Study Results

- * The average total bacteria on the remote controls was 320.
- * The average total bacteria on sites in the hospital room was 91.
- * The average total bacteria on newly opened disposable remotes was 8.35.
There was no detection of *Staphylococcus aureus* on newly opened disposable remotes.
- * MRSA bacteria were present on television remote controls in patient hospital rooms.

As the most frequently used and handled device in a patient's room, and as the leading carrier of bacteria, a future study would address the television remote control as a leading source of hospital-acquired patient infection.

As a subsidiary of New Remotes -- manufacturer of the popular Miracle

Remote series -- NOSO Control manufactures disposable remote controls for the hospital, medical and healthcare industries, to help alleviate infection in

hospital room settings. With the introduction of the company's new disposable remote control, NOSO Control is quickly gaining momentum in re-defining the television and satellite wholesale remote industries, as well as key vertical markets including: the hospital industry, the medical supplier/distribution industry, hospitality industries and pharmaceutical industry, among others.

Source: NOSO Control

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